

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This chapter highlights the main concluding remarks based on the findings and discussion of the pragmatic competence of the Islamic boarding school students regarding their realization of the speech acts of apologies in the Arabic and English as non-native languages. It starts with summarizing the main findings regarding the students' apology strategies found in the Arabic and English languages. Then, it concludes the main findings regarding the contextual factors and their effect upon the students' selection and production of the apology strategies as well as the pragmatic transfer. Based on the findings of this research, the chapter presents some relevant implementations and suggestions.

1.1 Conclusions

This research has attempted to provide an exploration of the pragmatic competence of the Islamic boarding school students in the realization of the speech acts of apologizing in two foreign languages, Arabic and English. Besides, the present case study has aimed to determine the effect of the linguistic environment and the contextual factors in the Boarding School on the interlanguage development of the students' acquisition of the L2 pragmatic knowledge. The concluding remarks were drawn based on the three research problems. Those are the *apology strategies used by Senior Boarding School Students in the Arabic and English languages, whether contextual factors (external & internal) influence the students' selection of the apology strategies, and the ways and extent to which the Senior Boarding School Students make a pragmatic transfer when apologizing in English and Arabic.*

Regarding the first research question, it detected from the interlanguage data that the students implemented the five universal apology strategies in their responses in the eight situations in the Arabic and English languages. These strategies are the *IFID*, the *Explanation*, the *Taking on responsibility*, the *Promise*

for forbearance, and the *Offer of repair*. The students' most preferable strategy is the IFID, which represents the Head Act semantic formula of their apology.

Having the *Promise for forbearance* strategy, which is one of the supportive moves, the students used it with most occurrences in both languages by both genders. The preference to use this strategy more frequently is because the fact that the students believe that their offenses might not be forgiven without declaring a promise and satisfying and fulfilling the wants of the offended parties.

Besides, there are found new apology strategies employed by both genders in both languages that might be called 'new supportive moves' namely, *blame the offended party*, *non-apology*, *Requesting in apologizing*, and *Non-verbal strategy*. Their linguistic features include argumentation, opting-out, requesting, and sign language, respectively.

The frequency distribution of each strategy determines the differences in the selection and production of the apology strategies. Therefore, this research found that the students (male & female) used more apology strategies in the English language than in the Arabic language. It has been discussed throughout this research that the students' lack of pragmatic competence in the Arabic language affects the selection of an appropriate and accurate sequence of apology strategies.

The distribution of the selection and production of apology strategies occurs between male and female students. In this regard, females tended to use more apology strategies than male students did. This difference might be attributed to the fact that the students consider apologies as negative politeness strategies that aimed at remedying the effects of an offense and restoring the solidarity and harmony between the students. The difference in the selection and production of the apology strategies might be attributed also to the students' perception of the apology in which the male students perceive apology as a self-oriented FTA, which may cause them to lose face. Thus, avoiding to apologize is a possibility. The female students, on the other hand, are other-oriented in the sense that they like to facilitate restoring social harmony. For instance, the female students apologize more for the younger students to restore harmony and peace,

which is essential for keeping friendship and goodwill. On the contrary, the male students tended to argue than to offer an apology.

Regarding the second research question, this dissertation has shown that the external and internal factors play a significant role in the offender's apology. More specifically, the *severity of the offense* influences 'gender' in the selection and production of the apology speech acts in the sense that female students employed more apology strategies than male students did. Interestingly, in situation 2 (late to class), the male students apologize less compared to the female students regardless of the high relative power between the teacher and the student. It can be attributed to the fact that students apologize only to avoid the academic penalty and not because of their recognition of the power of the offended party, which means that the students tend to apologize more to their peers, especially younger students, than to their academic teachers.

Regarding the third question, the findings of this dissertation showed that the pragmatic transfer is mainly affected by the students' lack of sufficient and adequate linguistic knowledge (e.g., pragmatic competence) in a non-native language. This findings assure that the pragmatic competence of the boarding school students is lower than a "native speaker". The most findings emerged for this research regarding the pragmatic competence is that, at the pragmalinguistic level, the students of the boarding school avoid to use essential linguistic elements within the Head Act strategy in the English language, such as avoidance to use IFID, which refer to "Macro-transfer". In the Arabic language, the students selected inappropriate sub-strategies of the Head Act to remedy their offenses. In other words, they generalize strategies from their L1 and transfer them into L2s. Interestingly, the findings assure that the transfer is language-specific in the sense that the student tended to transfer linguistic items that are found in the source language but not found in the target language 'Micro-transfer'. In other words, it is evident that the pragmatic failure occurred in more occurrences in the Arabic language than in English.

The researcher will reduce the over-mentioned general conclusions to more specific conclusions. The students used typical Head Acts and Supportive Moves strategies in both languages. Specifically, the students tended to use less

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direct apology strategies more than direct apology strategies in the Arabic language; Head Acts 49% vs. Supportive moves 51%. In the Head Act semantic formula, the students prefer to use the less formal sub-strategy *expression of regret* with most occurrences in the two languages in the eight situations. In the supportive moves, the students tended to use the *Promise for forbearance* strategy with more occurrences due to the impact of the social power and dominance between the offender and the offended party. Besides, the students used equal elaboration of the semantic formulas in the Arabic and English languages, which is up to five levels.

Interlanguage showed that there is a massive gap in the students' level of performing the speech acts of apologizing in the Arabic and English. The fact is that the current teachers, who teach the Arabic language, lack of quality where qualified teachers of the Arabic language are assigned to teach Islamic Education rather than Arabic. Due to the pragmatic transfer, the boarding school students showed fair proficiency in the pragmatic competence to perceive native-like apology strategies, particularity in the Arabic language. To this end, another issue might be taken into consideration is conceding with the students' lack of pragmatic competence that is the lack of teaching the students the speech acts of apologizing in a non-native language.

Regarding the intensification, the students used high intensification within the Head Act strategy and outside the head act strategy. Within the head act strategy, the students used the intensifiers *jiddan* 'very', *haqqan* 'really', and *wallahi* in the Arabic language and *so*, *really*, and *very* in the English language with more occurrences. Moreover, expressions are manifesting the students' cultural and religious beliefs, such as the use of expression related to the name of Allah (e.g., *insh'Allah*, *bi'ithni'Allah*). Besides, the students tended to introduce their apologies with titles and alerts to placate the offended parties and to cope up with the Islamic values being learned within the Islamic boarding schools. Hence, the students' solidarity politeness is released by using various types of intensifications and apology strategies.

The students' level of the pragmatic competence determines their selection and production of the appropriate and less appropriate semantic formulas of

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apologizing in a non-native language. The internal factors affect the students' selection of the apology rather than the external factors. Thus, the students used most apologies to the younger students than to the academic teachers. Thus, female students tended to use typical apology occurrences to situations with different degrees of imposition (light, middle, and severe), whereas male students tended to be selective. In other words, the female students tended to select the appropriate apology for the appropriate offense.

The apologies of the boarding school students can be characterized as self-humbling in the sense that they contain expression indicating their low social power, which is released by down-grader expressions such as '*my stupidity*'.

Indonesian Boarding schools have a positive impact on the students' linguistic knowledge in a foreign language. They enhanced the students' speech acts in the English and Arabic language in which apologies are inherited in the Islamic values, which represents the Muslim politeness. Thus, the students used humble apologies to show their *akhlak* (Islamic values) towards the offended parties. It can be said that the lack of the students' pragmatic competence, grammatical competence, and proficiency in the Arabic and English language as non-native languages make their apologies sound as a formulaic-oriented rather than genuine-oriented.

The present study makes several noteworthy contributions to the theory of the politeness in the sense that the findings are drawn from a carefully designed instrumentation known as DCT, which contains situations with real offenses based on the Islamic values regarding morality, social gaffe, possession, and time regarding the violation of the rules of the boarding school.

1.2 Implementation

The findings of this research might be implemented in the theory of pragmatics, the curriculum of Islamic Boarding Schools, and communication skills.

In the first area, the findings highlighted the level of the pragmatic competence of the boarding school students' interlanguage pragmatic IL knowledge of the speech acts of apologies. What can be added to the literature in this regard is that apologies are on record negative politeness, in which the

students tend to be more direct in their apologies. In other words, they inclined to use direct *Promise* to fulfill and satisfy the wants of the offended parties. The findings of this dissertation ensure that, unlike the understanding of politeness in the Western countries in which politeness is not obligatory, in Islam and Islamic culture politeness is obligatory for all. As for the performing of the speech acts of apologies, the students showed more negativity than positivity. This fact has drawn from the negative pragmalinguistic transfer of some linguistic elements from the L1 into the L2s, such as phonological and lexical choice, which native speakers consider it an act of rudeness than a normal mistake. The negativity is the linguistic phenomenon that causes a pragmatic failure. Besides, the findings assure that apologies are cultural-specific, language-specific, age-specific, and religion-specific, but a universal human phenomenon is inherited innately.

Regarding the second area, the Indonesian Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) have already established language and linguistic programs to enhance the students' (*santri/murid*) pragmatic competence in non-native languages mainly in the Arabic and English languages. For example, there must be a daily conversation in Arabic and English languages. However, these programs lack experts or native-likes to facilitate them. Therefore, the findings of this study advocate the Islamic boarding schools to re-design the current textbooks in the Arabic and English languages as the lack of materials contain lessons about teaching different types of speech acts. Based on the researcher's interview and observation in the boarding school under investigation, the students claimed they never study about apologies, and their textbook did not contain materials about apologizing '*we have not being taught how to apologize in Arabic and English*'. As the findings of this study contain a model of the students' pragmatic and grammatical competence failure 'errors' in performing the speech acts of apologies, the Islamic boarding schools might take these 'errors' into consideration and develop the current curriculum or hire skillful native-likes.

Regarding the third area, the findings of this research come up with the suggestion that successful communication is built-in two-way interaction pure of linguistic barriers. In everyday interaction, people produce huge types of speech acts. Therefore, not all of them can perform these speech acts appropriately and

adequately in their language to maintain successful communication. In this regard, the skillful communicator is someone who decreases the errors detected by the H in a native and non-native language. In line with these facts, throughout this research, we have encountered plenty of pragmalinguistic aspects contain some inappropriate and ambiguous linguistic elements that emerged from the responses to the speech acts of apologies by non-native speakers of the Arabic and English languages. It can be said that the collaboration in the communication is irrelevant in some aspects of the students' apology strategies, which cause a communicative failure. Most importantly, the findings of the dissertation can be converted into a new interlanguage pragmatic model of apologizing, as in the following chart.

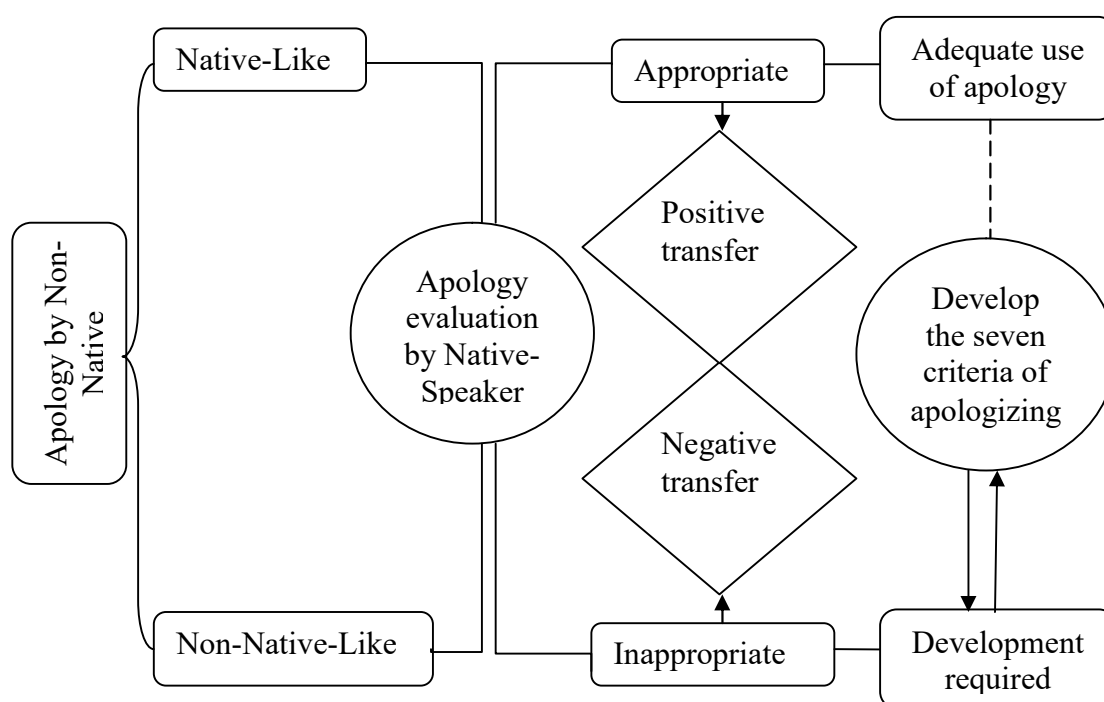


Figure 5. 1 An Interlanguage Model for Developing Non-native Speakers' Apologizing

Figure 5.1 presents a new model of the interlanguage pragmatic development of the speech acts of apologizing as produced by non-native speakers. The model consists of three parts. The first part presents the two types of apology strategies produced by non-native speakers, namely native-like and non-native-like. A native-like apology is an apologetic strategy judged by the native speaker as an appropriate apology, whereas the non-native apology judged

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by the native speaker as inappropriate. The second part presents the appropriateness in the selection of the apology strategies in which appropriate apology results from positive transfer, whereas inappropriate apology results from negative transfer. The third part construes the illocutionary force of the apology in which it is treated as politeness or rudeness. In this case, the apology can be politeness if the apology is native-like and appropriate. If the apology is non-native and inappropriate, which is caused by negative pragmatic transfer, it may produce rudeness apology and needs to be developed based on the following seven criteria of apologizing. First, make sure the IL pragmatic fits the speech acts of the target language. Second, set the apology to fit the target culture. Third, set the apology to fit the offense. Fourth, start the apology by expressing remorse. Fifth, intensify the apology with the most accurate intensifiers. Sixth, elaborate the apology to contain at least one supportive move. Seventh, avoid using too many words within the apology. The interlocutors can follow these seven steps to avoid communication failure when apologizing in a non-native language.

The seven-points may construe a professional apologizer and professional apology. In other words, the speech acts of apologizing should be taught as a system of communication rather than a subject of study

1.3 Suggestions

This research presents two types of suggestions: theoretical and implicative. Theoretically, regarding the students' implementation of the semantic formulas in a non-native language, this research came up with indications of the different use of the semantic formulas in the Arabic and English languages. Therefore, it is recommended that there are still many issues, which require further research.

Firstly, this research recommends a longitudinal study that can major the students' development of the pragmatic competence of the speech acts of apologies in a specific period. Secondly, as this research used the DCT and the mini-interview to collect the data, it recommends more studies regarding gender and the realization of the speech acts of apologies in the sense that by collecting oral data than written one. This method might yield authentic data that reflects the students' real apology strategies.

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Implicatively, in order to enhance the students' pragmatic competence in a non-native language, this research suggests that in order to empower the students' pragmatic competence in a non-native language, the teachers must build the students' confidence by providing them with accurate materials and information, so that the learners behave in a way like a native speaker. Furthermore, the research came up with significant indications that reflect the variation among the students' responses in the Arabic and English languages. Consequently, the suggestions recommend that teachers have to provide the students with apology patterns that are observed in a target community and are appreciated by the native speakers. In order to avoid the pragmalinguistic failure that appeared in the Arabic data, teachers of boarding schools must be equipped with sufficient knowledge of the pragmalinguistic of Arabic language to share it with their students.